

Message Text

PAGE 01 CAIRO 03622 01 OF 02 231750Z

51

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 /031 W

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R 231445Z NOV 73

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4420

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 3622

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG UR

SUBJECT: CALL ON SOVIET AMBASSADOR VINOGRADOV

1. SUMMARY: VINOGRADOV INTERESTED IN CODEL STRATTON'S ACTIVITIES AND PURPOSE. ALSO CLAIMS SADAT DISSATISFIED WITH IMPLEMENTATION ALL ASPECTS 6-POINT AGREEMENT. CONTENTS ISRAELI RETURN TO OCTOBER 22 LINES ESSENTIAL TO ENABLE GOE TO PARTICIPATE IN PEACE CONFERENCE. USG SHOULD URGE ISRAEL TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE. I TOLD HIM WHILE EGYPTIANS HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT LACK OF PROGRESS ON DISENGAGEMENT, THEY HAD EXPRESSED NO RECENT DISSATISFACTION TO ME ABOUT OTHER POINTS. I THOUGHT BOTH SIDES INTERESTED IN PEACE CONFERENCE AND USG REMAINS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO SUCH A MEETING AT AN EARLY DATE. END SUMMARY.

2. I CALLED ON VINOGRADOV TODAY FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. AFTER AMENITIES, HE ASKED ABOUT VISITING CODEL STRATTON. I DESCRIBED CODEL TO HIM, NOTING IT IS A SUB-COMMITTEE FROM THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE WHICH IS MAKING FIRST-HAND STUDY OF ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN VIEWS AND THAT IT IS TODAY VISITING FRONT LINES AS GUEST OF EGYPTIAN MILITARY. VINOGRADOV WANTED TO KNOW WHAT ATTITUDES MEMBERS OF CODEL ARE TAKING. TOLD HIM THAT IN MY TALKS WITH ITS MEMBERS, THEY SHOWED EVERY DESIRE TO BE OBJECTIVE AND HEAR BOTH SIDES. I WAS SURE
SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 03622 01 OF 02 231750Z

THEY ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO JUST THAT. HE CLEARLY RETAINED SOME SUSPICIONS WHY SO LARGE A CODEL SHOULD BE VISITING AT THIS TIME AND HALF-JOKINGLY SPECULATED PERHAPS A LARGE MILITARY AID PROGRAM FOR EGYPT WAS CON-

TEMPLATED. I TOLD HIM ONE NEVER KNEW, BUT I THOUGHT THIS UNLIKELY.

3. VINOGRADOV THEN ASKED MY IMPRESSIONS OF MY FIRST TWO WEEKS IN CAIRO. TOLD HIM I HAD BEEN STRUCK BY DISPASSIONATE AND BUSINESSLIKE APPROACH WHICH EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS HAVE SHOWN IN MY DEALINGS WITH THEM. I THOUGHT THEY GENUINELY WANTED PEACE AND WERE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN A PEACE CONFERENCE NOW THAT THEY COULD DO SO WITH A SENSE OF PRIDE. NEITHER SIDE HAD WON AN OVERWHELMING VICTORY. BOTH ARE AWARE OF THE ENORMOUS COSTS OF ANOTHER ROUND OF HOSTILITIES. WHILE SENIOR EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS WITH WHOM I HAD TALKED HAVE CONFIDENCE IN CONTINUING STRENGTH OF THEIR MILITARY, THEY ALSO REALIZE THAT NEGOTIATIONS OFFER A BETTER WAY OF TRYING TO SOLVE LONG-FESTERING ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEMS THAN DOES WAR.

4. VINOGRADOV AGREED BUT PROFESSED TO BE DISTURBED ABOUT WHAT HE CALLED NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SIX-POINT AGREEMENT AND ESPECIALLY ABOUT ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO RETURN TO THE OCTOBER 22 LINES IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 2 OF THAT AGREEMENT. EGYPTIANS, HE CONTENTED, ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY BITTER ABOUT THIS FAILURE. I RESPONDED THAT MY UNDERSTANDING IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. WHILE THERE HAD BEEN EARLIER EGYPTIAN CONCERN EXPRESSED TO ME THAT THE CURRENT MILITARY TALKS WERE NOT RESOLVING THE UN CHECKPOINT QUESTION, POW RETURN, ETC., NO SUCH COMPLAINTS HAD RECENTLY BEEN MADE. MY UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT THESE MATTERS HAD NOW BEEN LARGELY RESOLVED IN THE MILITARY TALKS. THERE HAVE INDEED BEEN A FEW SCATTERED FIREFIGHTS, BUT THESE HAD QUICKLY SUBSIDED. EGYPTIANS HAVE EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN OVER FAILURE TO PROGRESS ON DISENGAGEMENT, BUT I THOUGHT OTHER POINTS WERE BEING REASONABLY WELL IMPLEMENTED. VINOGRADOV INSISTED THIS IS NOT SO. SAID HE SAW SADAT ONLY YESTERDAY, WHO HAD EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL POINTS. SADAT HAD NOT GONE INTO DETAILS, BUT HAD CRITICIZED ISRAELI BEHAVIOR IN ESTABLISHING UN CHECKPOINTS, THEIR CONTINUING MILITARY BUILDUP, ETC. PRESIDENT HAD BEEN INCENSED ABOUT FAILURE OF ISRAELIS TO WITHDRAW TO THE OCTOBER 22 LINES. VINOGRADOV TOLD SADAT HE WAS SEEING ME TODAY AND ASKED IF HE MIGHT PASS ON THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENT. SADAT SAID HE COULD DO SO.

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 03622 01 OF 02 231750Z

MENTATION OF ALL POINTS. SADAT HAD NOT GONE INTO DETAILS, BUT HAD CRITICIZED ISRAELI BEHAVIOR IN ESTABLISHING UN CHECKPOINTS, THEIR CONTINUING MILITARY BUILDUP, ETC. PRESIDENT HAD BEEN INCENSED ABOUT FAILURE OF ISRAELIS TO WITHDRAW TO THE OCTOBER 22 LINES. VINOGRADOV TOLD SADAT HE WAS SEEING ME TODAY AND ASKED IF HE MIGHT PASS ON THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENT. SADAT SAID HE COULD DO SO.

5. VINOGRADOV THEN MADE LENGTHY PITCH THAT USG SHOULD PRESS ISRAEL TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE. HE BELITTLED PROGRESS MADE THUS FAR UNDER "YOUR SIX-POINT AGREEMENT." UN CHECKPOINTS WOULD NOT BE NEEDED IF ISRAELIS RETURNED TO OCTOBER 22 LINES. AS FOR PRISONER EXCHANGE, THIS

MAINLY BENEFITED ISRAEL; EGYPT HAD NOT BEEN THAT CONCERNED ABOUT ANY QUICK REPATRIATION OF ITS POWS. ISRAELIS SHOULD ALSO OBSERVE CEASEFIRE MORE SCRUPULOUSLY. IS ISRAEL READY TO ATTEND A PEACE CONFERENCE? MRS. MEIR'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS SUGGESTING IT BE DELAYED UNTIL AFTER ISRAELI ELECTIONS HAVE FURTHER ROILED THE EGYPTIANS. ISRAEL SHOULD NOT TRY TO MIX DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS. BY EMBARRASSING EGYPTIANS BEFORE OTHER ARABS, ISRAELI ACTIONS ARE CREATING PROBLEMS FOR GOE IN ATTENDING CONFERENCE.

6. I SAID MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT EGYPT IS JUST AS PLEASED TO HAVE POWS BACK AS IS ISRAEL. HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS OF SIX POINTS CLEARLY BENEFIT BOTH SIDES. I

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 03622 02 OF 02 231836Z

53

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4421
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 CAIRO 3622

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POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS SOME UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE OCTOBER 22 LINES AND REMINDED HIM THAT SIX-POINT AGREEMENT SPEAKS OF RETURN TO THOSE LINES IN FRAMEWORK OF DISENGAGEMENT AND SEPARATION OF FORCES UNDER UN AUSPICES. (VINOGRADOV INTERJECTED THAT NEWSWEEK CLEARLY DEPICTED OCTOBER 22 LINES.) I THOUGHT ISRAEL ALSO WANTS PEACE AND IS READY TO ATTEND CONFERENCE. I SAID I HAD SEEN MRS. MEIR'S STATEMENT AND COULD UNDERSTAND HER POSITION. HE SHOULD REALIZE IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ANY ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TO NEGOTIATE ON SENSITIVE PEACE ISSUES WHEN ITS ACTIONS ARE VULNERABLE TO POLITICALLY MOTIVATED OPPOSITION ATTACKS AND APPEALS TO AN ELECTORATE. I ADDED THAT USG REMAINS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO A PEACE CONFERENCE AT AN EARLY DATE ONCE ALL PARTIES HAVE AGREED TO PARTICIPATE. I ASKED IF THIS WAS ALSO STILL SOVIET VIEW.

7. VINOGRADOV REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY, BUT STILL EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT EGYPTIANS CAN GO TO SUCH A CONFERENCE WITHOUT SOME PRIOR PROGRESS ON DISENGAGEMENT. WHEN I ASKED IF HE THOUGHT EGYPTIAN PARTICIPATION IN A PEACE

CONFERENCE IS CONDITIONAL ON THIS, HE BACKED OFF SLIGHTLY. HE SAID HE DID NOT MEAN TO GO THAT FAR, BUT MERELY MEANT TO STRESS THAT EGYPT WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT BEFORE OTHER ARABS TO ATTEND A PEACE CONFERENCE WHEN THERE HAS BEEN NO PRIOR PROGRESS ON DISENGAGEMENT. IN THAT CASE CONFERENCE WOULD BE FORCED TO DEVOTE ITS ENERGIES TO THIS CRITICAL POINT. USG SHOULD URGE "YOUR CLIENTS"

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 03622 02 OF 02 231836Z

TO BE MORE UNDERSTANDING OF EGYPTIAN POSITION. I SAID I HAD SEEN PRESS STORIES THAT USSR MIGHT AT SOME TIME RESUME DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. IF SO, PERHAPS HE, AS LEADING SOVIET AUTHORITY ON EGYPT, MIGHT THEN BE SENT TO ISRAEL TO EXPLAIN ARAB VIEWPOINT. HE LAUGHED AND SAID NOT LIKELY--ON EITHER COUNT.

8. VINOGRADOV SAID USG SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE IMPORTANCE GOE ATTACHES TO ISRAEL'S RETURN TO OCTOBER 22 LINES AS AN EARNEST OF SERIOUS INTENT TO HOLD PEACE TALKS. I SAID USG HAS NO MISCONCEPTION ON THIS POINT, BUT BELIEVES DISENGAGEMENT PERHAPS BEST BE APPROACHED IN A BROADER CONTEXT.

9. VINOGRADOV NOTED EGYPTIANS SOMETIMES HIDE THEIR TRUE FEELINGS BEHIND EXCESSIVE POLITENESS. FOR EXAMPLE, SADAT HAD BEEN EXTREMELY POLITE LAST YEAR WHEN ASKING SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS TO WITHDRAW. USSR HAD DONE SO QUICKLY AND WITHOUT DEMURRAL. SOVIET RELATIONS WITH EGYPT, HE STRESSED, REMAIN CLOSE AND FRIENDLY AND ARE BASED ON RESPECT FOR EGYPT'S INDEPENDENCE. I SAID I HAD HEARD SOME SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS MIGHT BE BACK. HE DENIED THIS, INSISTING ONLY SOVIET "TECHNICIANS" WHO HAVE BEEN HERE FOR SOME TIME REMAIN. CLAIMED USSR NOT ANXIOUS HAVE ADVISORS WITH EGYPTIAN ARMY SINCE THEY COULD CBNCEIVABLY BECOME INVOLVED IN COMBAT SITUATIONS.

10. WE AGREED KEEP IN TOUCH.

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